

March 13, 2022

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, distinguished members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. My name is Andrew Wicks and I am the Director of Youth Ministry and Special Missions at First Church of Christ in Glastonbury, CT. We are members of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance and are deeply invested in seeing a more equitable justice system in our state. As an Authorized Minister in the United Church of Christ, I feel it is my duty to speak out about several of the bills you are currently considering.

I am writing **IN SUPPORT** of:

- [S.B. No. 387](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.
- [S.B. No. 392](#) AN ACT CONCERNING STATEMENTS MADE BY JUVENILES.

I am writing **IN STRONG OPPOSITION** to the following bills:

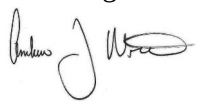
- [S.B. No. 365](#) AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS
- S.B. No. 388: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFENSE OF A PERSON OR A PERSON'S DWELLING, PLACE OF WORK OR MOTOR VEHICLE.
- [H.B. No. 5418](#) AN ACT REVISING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATUTES AND INSURANCE STATUTES CONCERNING THEFT OF A MOTOR VEHICLE
- [H.B. No. 5417](#) AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE JUSTICE AND SERVICES AND FIREARMS BACKGROUND CHECKS.
- [S.B. No. 386](#) AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY LAWS OF THIS STATE.
- [S.B. No. 16](#) AN ACT ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE AND JUVENILE CRIME

I am testifying in opposition to the bills I listed above because I do not believe they will be effective in addressing the underlying issues inherent to crime in our state, and will instead result in more Black and Brown youth and low-income White youth becoming ensnared in the juvenile justice system with negative lifelong consequences.

This issue is important to me because I care about the deep racial disparities in our justice system. Just after my 18th birthday, I, myself was arrested for a petty criminal act. As a wealthy white suburban teen with access to a private attorney, the matter was addressed quietly, in part because our criminal justice system saw promise in my future. I have made the most of that promise by becoming a minister and working with children and families to shape the values of our next generations. Harsh punishments didn't get me where I am today, but rather support, compassion and mercy. For too many youth who come from the wrong neighborhood, or don't have the kind of resources I had, the system instead becomes a trap, with compounding and lasting consequences. Unfortunately, we know that there is a distinct racial disparity in how the system deals with youth offenders. In light of my own experiences, and the inherent value of the future of all of our state's youth, we must do better.

I urge you to SUPPORT [S.B. No. 392](#) and [S.B. No. 387](#) with the recommendations submitted by the [Connecticut Justice Alliance](#). Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today and feel free to reach out if you have any further questions.

Kind Regards,



Andrew J. Wicks

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